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ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS CAIRO 001775

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SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [PGOV](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: NEW OUTBREAK OF CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM FIGHTING IN ALEXANDRIA

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

1. (SBU) CLASHES BROKE OUT OVER THE WEEKEND BETWEEN COPTIC CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS IN THE VILLAGE OF ABDEL QADER, WEST OF ALEXANDRIA, AFTER A PERSONAL DISPUTE BETWEEN TWO VILLAGERS ERUPTED INTO A WIDER CONFLICT. THE SITUATION REMAINED TENSE THE MORNING OF JUNE 11, ACCORDING TO CHURCH OFFICIALS, WITH GOE SECURITY PERSONNEL RESTRICTING ENTRY TO THE VILLAGE AND SURROUNDING THE LOCAL MAKESHIFT CHURCH.

2. (SBU) PRESS REPORTS AND CHURCH OFFICIALS INDICATE THAT TROUBLE BEGAN FRIDAY, JUNE 8 AFTER A CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM INHABITANT OF THE VILLAGE SCUFFLED AFTER A DISPUTE. THE INVOLVED PARTIES TOOK THEIR DISPUTE TO THE POLICE, WHO REPORTEDLY INTERVENED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM, BUT HOURS LATER A GROUP OF MUSLIMS STORMED INTO CHRISTIAN HOMES AND ATTEMPTED TO ATTACK THE VILLAGE CHURCH, WHICH IS HOUSED IN A NON-DESCRIPT BUILDING THAT SERVES NOMINALLY AS A COPTIC "SERVICE CENTER." SEVERAL WINDOWS OF THE CHURCH WERE BROKEN BUT THERE WAS NO INTERNAL DAMAGE. CROWDS OF MUSLIMS HAVE REPORTEDLY CONTINUED TO CONGREGATE AROUND THE CHURCH SINCE THE INCIDENTS BEGAN CHANTING "GOD IS GREAT" AND "THERE IS NO GOD BUT GOD," AS GOE SECURITY OFFICERS HOLD THEM AT BAY.

3. (SBU) CHURCH OFFICIALS REPORT THAT NINE CHRISTIANS WERE INJURED IN THE INITIAL CLASHES, EACH OF WHOM WAS LATER ARRESTED BY LOCAL POLICE. THEY REMAIN IN DETENTION, AS DO FOUR MUSLIM INHABITANTS OF THE VILLAGE. CHURCH OFFICIALS FEAR THE PROSPECT OF FURTHER VIOLENCE IN THE VILLAGE, AS FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE WOUNDED CHRISTIANS FROM UPPER EGYPT ARE REPORTEDLY EAGER TO TRAVEL TO THE VILLAGE TO AVENGE THE VIOLENCE.

4. (SBU) THE VILLAGE OF ABDEL QADER IS LOCATED ON THE WESTERN OUTSKIRTS OF ALEXANDRIA NEAR AMREYAH, AN AREA OF UNPLANNED "SUBURBS" HOUSING RECENT MIGRANTS TO THE CITY, MOSTLY FROM UPPER EGYPT. CHRISTIANS IN THESE AREAS ARE OFTEN UNABLE TO GAIN APPROVAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF FREE-STANDING CHURCHES, THUS MUST MAKE DO FOR CHURCH SERVICES INSIDE OTHER, NON-DESCRIPT STRUCTURES. ONE COPTIC PRIEST CONTACTED BY APP ALEXANDRIA PRINCIPAL OFFICER EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN THAT THE TRADITIONS OF UPPER EGYPT COULD PREVAIL IN THIS CASE, WHEREIN VIOLENCE REQUIRES REVENGE. COPTS ARE URGING GOE SECURITY FORCES TO RELEASE THE NINE DETAINED CHRISTIANS AND TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION FIRMLY TO AVOID FURTHER CLASHES BETWEEN THE COMMUNITIES.

5. THIS IS AN APP ALEXANDRIA MESSAGE.